GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2754
ANSWERED ON:19.03.2007
CLOSURE OF SARISKA TIGER RESERVE
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes the closure of Sariska Tiger Project;

(b) if so, the details and reasons therefor;

(c) whether the tigers are being hunted down in large numbers leading to decline of their number; and

(d) if so, the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) & (b) No, Sir.

(c) While some instances of poaching and trafficking of their body parts have come to light, there are no reports of hunting of tiger in large numbers, leading to their decline.

(d) The initiatives taken by the Government of India for conservation of tiger and other wild animals are at Annexure-I.

ANNEXURE-I

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (d) OF THE LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2754 REGARDING CLOSURE OF SARISKA TIGER RESERVE DUE FOR REPLY ON 19.03.2007.

Several milestone initiatives have been taken by the Government in the recent past for tiger conservation which are as below:

1. Strengthening of antipoaching activities, including special strategy for monsoon patrolling, by providing funding support to Tiger Reserve States, as proposed by them, for deployment of antipoaching squads involving ex-army personnel / home guards, apart from workforce comprising of local people, in addition to strengthening of communication / wireless facilities.
2. Implementation of the urgent recommendations of the Tiger Task Force constituted by the National Board for Wildlife chaired by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, which, interalia, include Amendment of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 for creating the National Tiger 6Bureau.
3. The National Tiger Conservation Authority has been constituted with effect from 4.09.2006, which would strengthen tiger conservation by, interalia, ensuring normative standards in tiger reserve management, preparation of reserve specific tiger conservation plan, laying down annual / audit report before Parliament, constituting State level Steering Committees under the Chairmanship of Chief Ministers and establishment of Tiger Conservation Foundation.
4. Assessment of tiger habitat status in the country at Taluka amplification in the Geographical Information System (GIS) domain in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India.
5. Comparative appraisal of forest cover status in and around tiger reserves (upto a radial distance of 10 kms.), in collaboration with the Forest Survey of India for evolving reserve specific restorative strategies involving local people in the peripheral / buffer areas.
6. Assessment of tiger reserves by a panel of independent experts based on 45 parameters, adapted from the framework of the World Commission on Protected Areas, which has been peer reviewed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and laid in the Parliament.
7. Refinement of the All India Tiger Estimation process (including other prominent prey and predators apart from habitat monitoring) in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India.
8. Bilateral initiatives with neighbouring tiger range countries.
9. Providing funding support for ecodevelopment around core areas of tiger reserve to foster inclusive management and taking initiatives for evolving a set of ecotourism guidelines to benefit local people.
10. Taking initiatives for enhancing the village relocation package through a professional agency.
Apart from the above, other initiatives taken by the Government for wildlife conservation are as below:
11. Legal protection has been provided to wild animals against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
12. Several rare and endangered species of wild animals have been included in the Schedules of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby giving it highest degree of protection.

13. The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended and made more stringent. The punishment in cases of offences has been enhanced. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that has been used for committing any wild life offence.
14. Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehended and prosecute wildlife offenders.
15. Government of India has set up Regional and Sub-regional Offices for wildlife preservation in major export and trade centers of the country to prevent smuggling of wild animals and their products.
16. Financial and technical help is provided to the States under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, viz. Project Tiger, Project Elephant and Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the States for providing effective protection to wild animals.
17. A National Wildlife Action Plan 2002-16 was adopted by the Indian Board for Wild Life under the chairmanship of Prime Minister in January 2002. The plan outlines the strategy for conservation and protection of wildlife in the country.
18. Government of India is a signatory to many international conventions concerning biodiversity conservation and control of illegal trade in wild flora and fauna.
19. Bilateral agreements have been signed with Nepal and Republic of China for controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife.
20. A Global Tiger Forum of Tiger Range Countries has been created for addressing international issues related to tiger conservation.